

REMARKS

The Advisory Action dated August 13, 2008 has been received and its contents carefully noted. From the Summary page, the Reply filed July 2, 2008 purportedly did not place the present application in condition for allowance. Further, the period for reply to this Advisory Action is set to expire 3 months from the mailing date of the Final Rejection dated April 2, 2008. For purposes of Appeal, the claim amendments of July 1, 2008 were entered. Claims 1, 6-12, 17-18, 20-23 and 27 are indicated as rejected.

By this Response, the claims are amended further over Applicants' (entered) Amendment of July 1, 2008. Claim 7 is canceled. Claim 1 is amended to incorporate the features of claim 7 as well as to clarify previously claimed features in view of the Final Rejection and Advisory Action. New claims 30-34 have been added. No new subject matter has been added. Support for all claimed subject matter can be found in the original disclosure.

Accompanying this Response is a Petition for a 2 month Extension of Time with requisite fee for filing on or before September 2, 2008. Also, an RCE Request form is submitted with its requisite fee.

Remarks in view of New Claims 30-34

Applicant acknowledges the comments in the Advisory Action. Pursuant to these comments, claims 30-34 are introduced to further illustrate the present invention.

First, support for new claim 30 is evidenced by FIG. 13. The low temperature heating unit (LHP) 55*d* and baking unit (DLB) 55*e* are shown there.

Second, new claim 31 combines the features of claims 1 and 27. New claim 31 also seeks to clarify previously recited features that were purportedly rejected as obvious in the Final Rejection and in view of the comments in the Advisory Action. In particular, Applicant recites "the casing of the coating unit is constructed to cause the air blown from the air blowing mechanism into the coating unit to be exhausted from the coating unit into a portion of the air passageway below the bottom of the casing of the film thickness measuring unit". Support again is found in FIG. 13 wherein arrows denote exhaust gas flowing upward from the top of the coating unit to the bottom of the film thickness measuring unit. Support for the exhaust port 62 is also illustrated in FIG. 6. Applicant respectfully urges that the claimed features in new claim

31 patentably distinguish over the cited prior art and overcome the arguments made in the Advisory Action

Third, new claim 32 introduces features from claim 1 of JP 2002-333927, now Japanese Patent No. 430860, from which the above-identified application claims priority. Thus, no new matter was added for claim 32. Claim 1 was examined by the Japanese Patent Office (JPO) and deemed allowable. Accordingly, Applicant seeks the same conclusion for claim 32 herein.

Lastly, the same premise is submitted for new claim 33. It recites features of claim 3 of JP 2002-333927, now Japanese Patent No. 430860. Claim 34 derives features from allowable subject matter in JP 2002-333927, and also should be allowed.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. 103§ (a)

Claims 1, 7-12 and 26 stand rejected as being unpatentable over Masao (JP 202-064044) in view of Hirose (US 5762745).

The rejection as to claim 7 is moot. The rejection as to claims 1, 8-12 and 26 is traversed. Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal and reconsideration in view of the amended claims and arguments presented herein.

Regarding amended claim 1, Applicant provides clarifying amendments to structurally distinguish over the prior art and to answer comments in the Advisory Action of August 13, 2008. Namely, claim 1, as amended, recites the substrate processing units as stacked above one another, in which a temperature control unit controls the substrate after processing by a chemical liquid at a given operating temperature. The temperature control unit is enclosed within a casing 55c below the casing of the heating unit 55d and above the casing of the temperature control unit 55a. Additionally, the casings of the process units 55a-55e are arranged such that an air passageway is interposed between the respective insulative casings in order to provide heat insulation. Further, the insulating film-forming apparatus is designed so that air blown from the air blowing mechanism is continuously forced by the exhaust device 59 to pass through the coating unit, upwardly into the air passageway 58, around the casing of the temperature control unit, then to the air passageway around the casing of the heating unit, and finally to the exhaust device. Applicant kindly submits that Masao in view of Hirose does not teach or suggest the claimed structural features of amended claim 1. Thus, one of ordinary skill in the art would not

have found the present invention obvious in view of the cited references. Accordingly, Applicant solicits withdrawal and reconsideration of the rejection to claim 1.

Applicant has also considered the comments in the Advisory Action. The two substantive arguments advanced are: (i) Applicant's claim only submits that the air is capable of being "controlled" -- about which the Examiner asserts that the thermal properties of the air can be controlled by modulating the respective temperatures of the heating and cooling units and also by manipulating the residence time of the air within each unit; and (ii) Claim 1 recites "upward flow" without designating said flow as continuous, periodic or temporary-- about which the Examiner asserts that Masao's apparatus is capable of reversing, if just for an instant, the flow pattern of the fans such that a portion of the air passes from the coating unit to the air passageway.

In response to the first argument, Applicant has amended the claims to further incorporate casings units of process unit 55 in FIG. 13. Accordingly, the air is controlled by the structural characteristics of the casings. Because the casings are insulative, the air in the passageway remains constant without modification of the operating conditions of the individual process units, respectively. A significant advantage is a reduction in cost by not having to control the operating conditions of each processing unit individually. Thus, the combination of Masao in view of Hirose and the assertion of independently controlling the condition of air is unpersuasive in view of the structural limitations of the present invention. As such, the present invention patentably distinguishes thereover.

In response to the second argument, Applicant has amended the claims to recite a continuous flow of air through the passageway. The continuous flow provided in the present invention overcomes the assertion that air is capable of reversing. As such, the present invention is further distinguishable over the asserted art. In view of the considerable evidence in support of patentable subject matter, Applicant earnestly solicits reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection.

The rejection as to claims 8-12 is traversed on the same arguments presented for claim 1, *supra*, As such, Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal and reconsideration of this rejection.

Claims 6, 17-18 and 20 stand rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Masao and Hirose further view of Hayashi. Hayashi does not remedy the above described deficiencies of Masao and Hirose. Thus, the rejection is traversed for claims 6, 17-18 and 20. For the reasons submitted for claim 1, *supra*, Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal and reconsideration of the rejection to these claims.

Claims 21-23 stand rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Masao, Hirose, and Hayashi in further view of Nakai. Nakai does not remedy the aforementioned deficiencies. Hence, the rejection is traversed for claims 21-23. For the reasons submitted in support of claim 1, *supra*, Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal and reconsideration of the rejection to these claims.

Claim 27 stands rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Masao in view of Hirose and in further view of Mahara et al. Mahara likewise fails to remedy the deficiencies of Masao and Hirose. The rejection as to claim 27 is traversed. For the reasons urged in support of claim 1, *supra*, Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal and reconsideration of the rejection to this claim.

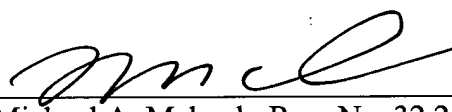
CONCLUSION

All of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Therefore, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner reconsider all presently outstanding rejections and that they be withdrawn. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action and, as such, the present application is in condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number provided.

If any fees under 37 C. F. R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17 are due in connection with this filing, please charge the fees to Deposit Account No. 02-4300, Order No. 033082M252.

Respectfully submitted,
SMITH, GAMBRELL & RUSSELL, LLP

By:


Michael A. Makuch, Reg. No. 32,263
1130 Connecticut Ave., N.W., Suite 1130
Washington, D.C. 20036
Telephone: (202) 263-4300
Facsimile: (202) 263-4329

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